

REMARKS

Claims 1-107 have been cancelled, claims 108-133 are newly added and currently pending in the application, with claims 108, 112, and 116 being independent. Claims 108-116 are method claims and claims 117-133 are product by process claims depending therefrom.

As previously noted in the Introduction to this Preliminary Amendment, this application is a continuation co-pending prior application Serial No. 10/290,052, filed on November 6, 2002, which is a continuation of patent application Serial No. 09/663,598 filed on September 15, 2000, now abandoned. A Notice of Allowance was mailed on January 16, 2004 in the 10/290,052 application, which required that the issue fee be paid by April 16, 2004. Rather than paying the issue fee, Applicants have elected to file the accompanying continuation application together with this Preliminary Amendment and the accompanying IDS.

The January 16, 2004 Notice of Allowance allowed claims 108-120. Thus, although these claims are newly presented in this application, they were previously considered and allowed in the parent application, which Applicants are no longer prosecuting. Dependent product by process claims 121-133, on the other hand, were never presented in the parent application.

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are fully supported by the specification and in condition for allowance. In addition, to the extent that further substantive prosecution is required in the subject application, Applicants request an Examiner's Interview and kindly request that the Examiner contact Applicants' attorneys in this matter so that such an interview may be scheduled.

Respectfully submitted,

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